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ABSTRACT

Examining the role played by ideology in a teacher research group, a study focused on the differing ideologies on research, teaching/learning, and writing held and developed by the members of the group. Treatments of teacher research remain directed mainly at clarifying the content, the status, and the boundaries of the research practice engaged in by teachers and describing how teacher research contrasts with "university research" with regard to these elements. The well-supported, university-affiliated teacher research group was comprised of from 19 to 20 teachers representing a wide spectrum of grade levels. All on the high school and college level taught English. Ethnographic participant observation occurred over the span of two years. Case studies of three members of the group illustrate the three global positions taken by members in the teacher research group: a "teacher empowerment" position, a "social change" position, and a "professional development" position. The concept of ideology was utilized to emphasize that beliefs about society, politics, and cognition are intimately bound up in the teacher researchers' different perspectives. Analysis of the ideological positions that developed within this teacher research group, along with the conflicts and interchanges among the participants, demonstrates that there are important divisions within the teacher research movement that are intellectually creative and socially important. (Contains 42 references, eight notes, and three figures which present a synthesis of the commonalities and differences among the three positions.) (RS)

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ABSTRACT

This paper is about the role played by ideology in a teacher research group. Treatments of teacher research remain mainly directed at clarifying the content, the status, and the boundaries of the research practice engaged in by teachers and describing how teacher research contrasts with "university research" with regard to these elements. *We focus on the differing ideologies of research, teaching/learning, and writing held and developed by the members of a teacher research group.* The concept of ideology is used to emphasize that beliefs about society, politics, and cognition were intimately bound up in the teacher researchers' different perspectives. In analyzing the ideological positions that developed within the group, and the conflicts and interchanges among participants, we show that there exist important divisions within the teacher research movement that are intellectually creative and socially important in their potential to generate needed discussion of assumptions underlying pedagogic practice.

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Ideological Divergences in a Teacher Research Group

Sandra R. Schecter and Shawn Parkhurst
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This paper is about the role played by ideology in a teacher research group. During the past few years teacher research has become increasingly popular in North America both as a "movement" and as an emerging field. Most of the activity has taken place within English education circles. Reports on research conducted by teachers are starting to find their way into print (Bissex & Bullock, 1987; Goswami & Stillman, 1987; "Learning from children," 1988; Mohr & MacLean, 1987), as are pieces which provide guidance on how teacher research is actually to be carried out (Elliot, 1981; Myers, 1985; Nixon, 1981). Also recently appearing are conceptual pieces which attempt to characterize teacher research as a mode of inquiry and to establish its epistemological ground (Applebee, 1987; Burton, 1986; Cazden, Diamondstone, & Naso, 1988; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Harste & Manning, 1991; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1990, 1992; North, 1987). Treatments of teacher research remain mainly directed at clarifying the content, the status, and the boundaries of the research practice engaged in by teachers and describing how teacher research contrasts with "university research" with regard to these elements. In focusing on ideology, we are shifting this focus.

We find ideology important for different, confluent, reasons. First, in view of our primary imperative as ethnographers to select analytic tools that are responsive to the context studied—it had a strong influence on the internal workings of the group considered: different participants in the group pursued, and sometimes clashed over, different research agendas because they held different beliefs about their mission as teacher researchers. Second, and more important broadly, having established the salience of the concept to the particular setting, we see value in work which seeks to represent and elucidate the belief systems of educators, since such beliefs and such systems have serious implications for the classroom experience and developed dispositions of students (Auerbach, 1991; McKay, 1993). If our efforts serve to engender a debate over either the assumptions underlying the different belief systems identified in our construct, or the viability of the construct itself—all the better: we will have been useful in proposing a framework where commonly held assumptions—about the role of written texts, the goals of teaching and learning, and the realities of power relationships within a professional community—can be reassessed, and, if need be, reconfigured.

TEACHER RESEARCH AS IDEOLOGICAL PRACTICE

In the extant literature the socio-political beliefs and practices informing teacher research have not been limned. If division is treated, then it is the one between (school-based) teacher research and (university-based) research on teaching. Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1989) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) provide excellent general treatments of this division. While the authors (1990, p. 4) acknowledge the existence of different takes on teacher research as a genre—images of teacher research range from "an approximation of university-based research" to "a more grassroots phenomenon that has its own internal standards of logic, consistency, and clarity" and beyond that to "a reflective or reflexive process that is for the benefit of the individual"—they do not attend to differing perspectives among actual teacher researchers. The divisions considered to be fundamental are those between university and school-based researchers. (For another perspective on these divisions, see Applebee, 1987). These "divisions," moreover, are treated as cognitive, or knowledge-based—rather than as cultural and political—and thus as eminently amenable to the improvement through technical engineering (in the form of better communication between the ivory tower and the trenches) that remains such a single-minded goal among leading segments of professional educators in the U.S. It seems likely, however, that there would be important divisions among teacher-researchers themselves, conflicting views on the mission and methods of teacher research. In this paper we focus on such views in their social aspect. This is our way of describing the heterogeneity of teacher researchers without lapsing into an "everybody is different" approach to analysis. In focusing on social ideas we employ the term "ideology." We agree with those who hold that "ideology" has sometimes been employed to connote that those who "have" it "are judging a particular issue through some rigid framework of preconceived ideas which distorts their understanding" (Eagleton, 1991, p. 3). We deny, however, that "ideology" *has* to mean this. Our use of the term, at any rate, is consonant with Eagleton's argument for retaining ideology as an analytical category—that "there is no such thing as presuppositionless thought" (Eagleton, 1991, p. 3)—an argument which we find especially important to bear in mind when engaging with ethnographic material on intellectual activity.

We recognize—along with Eagleton (1991), Larrain (1979), and others—that "ideology" is a term with historically and situationally varying meaning—that part of its meaning is its practice (see Billig et al., 1988, for a clear discussion of this point), a practice conducted by *social* groups. We make this variability part of our definition. What consistency the term ideology exhibits may be located in its regular reference to systematically related conceptions of what is real, what has value, and what is possible (Berlin, 1988, p. 479), conceptions articulated in discourse and other forms of practice

(Eagleton, 1991, p. 223). In this definition, just as there is no ideology without practice there is no practice without an attendant and informing ideology.[1]

METHODOLOGY

Methods and Data Sources

The analysis in this paper emerged from a two-year-long study of a well-supported, university-affiliated, teacher-research group.[2] In its initial phase, the study, directed by Schecter, was concerned primarily with: the effects of becoming researchers on teachers' views of classroom practice and of themselves as professionals; and the kinds of knowledge teacher research can provide and the ways in which teachers working as researchers represent and structure that knowledge in oral and written text. In the study's first year, the research team, consisting of Schecter and Rafael Ramirez, addressed these concerns by focusing primarily on the group "scene," as it were. In the second year, the team, which included Parkhurst as well, focused on eight individuals—four elementary school teachers; two high school teachers; and two college-level teachers—who had also participated in the group in the first year. The rationale for the case studies was that these would yield "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) of individual teachers' evolving thinking about their professional identity and knowledge bases for literacy instruction. In designing the study, we anticipated that the case studies would help reveal different perspectives on teacher research within the particular setting; that these differences involved an important ideological component, entailing positions and positioning, became clear only over time. Inevitably, in our search for meaning, we progressively modified the lens we brought to our study.

The basic methodology used both to address the study's original research questions and in the pursuit of hypotheses leading to the central thesis of this paper was ethnographic participant observation. The following kinds of data were collected: audio recordings and field notes of the bi-weekly whole-group meetings, smaller "response group" sessions, and informal exchanges with the facilitator and participants; audio recordings of formal interviews with participants at various stages in their research; the journal entries of

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[1] This includes academic practice: since social research is now widely considered a socially conditioned form of human action (for useful discussions of this see Lather, 1986, 1991) instead of a disinterested, affectless, "objective" pursuit of a social elite of "scientists," the way ideas are informed by and affect social research is a question that is now, thankfully, up for grabs. We recognize, then (along with Brodkey, 1987; de Castell & Walker, 1991), that the writing of research papers such as this one involves ideology as well.

[2] For a discussion of the structure, beliefs about professional role, and epistemological issues associated with this group see Schecter & Ramirez (1992).

participants; the progress reports of participants; and the form and content of in-house publications of participants' work.

The portraits of Marilyn, Kate, and Paula that follow are informed by the specific data, including quotes, collected from the eight focal participants; the data contributed by *all* group members inform our overall analyses and interpretations. In the course of comparing cases, we generated preliminary analytic categories based on tentative hypotheses; we then compared these results with data gathered from all group members. Here we emphasize that although the data from the case studies were helpful in revealing to us the ideological character of the divergences within the larger groups, and while these same data afforded rich, substantive opportunities for displaying these divergences, our argument does not rest on the case study data alone, or even primarily. Rather, the tensions described were found to characterize the groups as a whole.

Authors' Stance

Before continuing, we would like to address briefly the question of who we, the authors, are and how the "voice" that is heard in this paper is situated vis-à-vis the other voices that *could* speak with authority about the same set of circumstances.

Both authors approached the study from which the interpretations contained in this paper are derived as university-based researchers, although Schecter's role had several added dimensions: she had been active in soliciting and obtaining funding for the group; at the request of one of the group leaders, she read and responded to select journal entries by group participants; and she herself was a group participant. Parkhurst's involvement began only toward the end of the second year of the project. Although he attended some group meetings, his contribution was primarily in the area of data analysis. Beyond these dimensions, both Schecter and Parkhurst played roles in assisting group leaders and participants, when requested, in recommending or locating readings, photocopying, and transcribing audiotaped data.

Parkhurst had little actual teaching experience. Schecter had extensive experience teaching English, ESL, and bilingual education at the middle and high school, and adult education levels, as well as seven years experience as a teacher educator attached to an education department in a North American university. Although her own teaching background likely influenced her interpretations of the practices she witnessed—she definitely experienced an empathic pull toward all three positions described in this paper[3]—this aspect

[3] Parkhurst identified himself as most closely aligned with what we have called the "social change" position; Schecter had a tendency to identify with whichever position she was attending to at a given time. Given this state, in an attempt to correct for potential bias, the work was divided such that Schecter wrote the original drafts of the "Marilyn" and "Paula" portraits, attending to a lesser degree to "Kate."

did not figure strongly in her relationships either with the groups or with individual members. The observations which Schecter brought to share with her colleagues in the various participant structures where such sharing took place had to do primarily with the functioning of the actual teacher-research group—as opposed to the adaptive and interpretive strategies of students in her classes, for example. Thus, whatever authority she enjoyed derived primarily from her status as university researcher, rather than as accomplished classroom teacher.

Nor, in retrospect, would we have had things otherwise: the roles we embodied as university researchers were crucial to the decisions we made throughout—about how to organize our observations, about the narrative forms that we would use to represent them, about the interpretive methodologies through which we would understand them (Grumet, 1988; Miller, 1990)—and we would not have wished to misrepresent our perspective. However, although we were relatively unconflicted about our identities, and not, we hope, disingenuous about our motives, this should not be taken to mean that the processes by which we made certain decisions at key junctures were not sometimes unsettling, or that interactions with colleagues over such decisions were not often stressful. However, it is not our purpose in *this* paper to describe the nature of such trials or the ways in which we wrestled with the various issues and choices that arose. We do, however, feel obligated to share several important understandings we bring to our work as qualitative researchers.

First, we understand that there are "multiple narratives" that *could* be told based on the same set of observations (Grumet, 1987); some, in fact, have been told to us directly by colleagues in the group and, inevitably, in the course of our sense-making journey we have become separated from the voices through which the stories found their original or early forms. Second, we would not claim a privileged status for our "way of knowing" over other ways of generating knowledge for teaching (Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1992); in fact, those consulting this particular text with an eye to unfiltered applicability to their immediate classroom contexts may well find our way of knowing less advantageous than others available. Third, we welcome other interpretations of the observed practices we are about to describe, not, in the eloquent words of Grumet (1988, p. 60), "as impostors at the banquet planned for the truth but, indeed, as the guests of honor."

THE GROUP AND ITS SETTING

During the first year the group comprised nineteen teachers; during the second year, twenty, eleven of whom continued from the first year. (Schecter is included in both counts.) There was both notable homogeneity and variability among participants. All worked in publicly supported institutions, many of which were located in multi-ethnic settings. Grade level assignments were distributed along the spectrum from elementary school, through middle

school and high school, to college and university. In the first year, seven of the nineteen participants were elementary school teachers; three taught middle school; six high school; and three taught at the college level. Two of the elementary school teachers were involved in Special Education programs. Of the middle school teachers, two taught Science and one History. All those at the high school and college levels taught English. In the second year, the distribution was: seven, elementary school; one, middle school; six, high school; four, college level; and two, university level (undergraduate). Again, the curricular focus of the non-elementary level teachers was English, with the exception of one participant who taught French at a community college. Most participants could be described as leading active professional lives: they belonged to several professional associations and attended conferences in their field regularly.

Participants varied in teaching experience, ranging from two years to twenty-three, with the average being eleven years. They also varied in the ways they found entry to the group. A survey conducted by the organizers in the first year showed that of the nineteen participants, eleven found their way through previous contact of some sort with the National Writing Project,[4] with some of these reading about the group in a Writing Project newsletter, and others hearing about it either while participating in one of the Writing Project's summer programs for educators or from a Project teacher-consultant they knew. Four learned of the seminar from colleagues at their school sites, and three found their way on their own, fueled by enthusiasm about experiences either in university courses they had taken or with university researchers conducting studies in their schools. One participant had read articles about teacher research, and found out how to hook up with a group in her region at a professional conference she attended. For new participants in the second year, the pattern of access was similar.

The research group met in a seminar format. Meetings lasted approximately three hours, and took place bi-weekly in a university classroom. This time was spent in activities directed at aiding in the formulation and examination of classroom-centered, pedagogical questions concerned with the role of writing. The questions were to emerge from the teachers' interests, classroom observations, readings, reflections, and discussions with their students and their fellow teacher researchers.

Broadly, the first half of the meeting was devoted to whole group discussion; the second half, to smaller "response group" discussion of participants' issues about their ongoing research projects. The format and order of the seminar was generally as follows. Participants began to assemble

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[4] The National Writing Project (NWP) is a national program based in the U.S. that seeks to improve student writing by improving the teaching of writing. In this model of staff development, teachers identified as exemplary by their colleagues meet in five-week summer institutes to exchange successful teaching practices and learn to give demonstrations to groups of peers. There are currently 164 NWP sites at universities in 45 states in the U.S., Puerto Rico, and seven foreign countries.

around 5:30 p.m., and chatted and arranged food on tables as they waited for colleagues. About 5:45, the group leader signaled the start of the seminar by making and soliciting announcements about events both past and future related to teacher research or other professional activities for teachers. Following this came a main event varying from a talk by and exchange with an invited guest to the reading and discussion of an article or paper distributed by the group leader. This main event was closed by a break lasting about 15 minutes, during which group members talked informally and ate supper. The group leader then reconvened the group and introduced another main event, consisting of discussion in small response groups. Participants were encouraged to bring writing to share with their response group colleagues—recent journal entries or field notes for those just beginning their research projects, drafts of papers for those further along. In the first year, response groups were constituted at the beginning of the year at the discretion of the group leader, and their memberships remained constant except for normal losses through attrition. Over the second year, response groups were formed according to phases in the research process that participants located themselves at: "Finding a Question," "Data Collection," "Data Analysis," and "Writing." Thus, when a participant progressed to a different stage of the research process, the composition of two response groups would change.

POSITIONS AND POSITIONING

The groups displayed three global positions: what we would call a "teacher empowerment" position, a "social change" position, and a "professional development" position. By using these rubrics, we do not mean to imply that the position of any of these groups was exclusive of the goals signified by the terms referring to the others; these rubrics, however, are intended to convey our baseline interpretation of the core principle motivating the actions of the respective individuals involved.

We stress that we are referring to positioning as well as positions; in other words, to a social/cognitive process characterized by both fluctuation in the alignments of various individuals and what proved in the end to be relatively durable outlooks. Over time the conflict between the teacher empowerment and the social change positions came to exercise hegemony over the group; in other words, it effected either an alignment with one of the two categories or the marginalization of previously non-aligned individuals. Elsewhere in this paper we will refer to these two positions as the "hegemonic core." Our use of the terms "hegemony" and "hegemonic" are consonant with Eckert's (1989) formulation in *Jocks & Burnouts*, specifically, her observation that "it is not the positions themselves, but the opposition between them that is hegemonic" (p. 5). In this formulation, there is no contradiction, for example, in our asserting at once both the existence of three global positions, *and* that the set of choices publicly recognized as definers of

participants' social identities within the group were limited to those associated with only two of these positions.

At the risk of providing an overly formulaic outline of these perspectives, we found in them differences with respect to assumptions about research, assumptions about teaching and learning, and assumptions about writing. Before synthesizing these differences, however, we will first illustrate them by introducing three portraits representing the three categories.[5]

Teacher Research for Teacher Empowerment: Marilyn

Marilyn teaches ninth and tenth grade English Composition at La Hoja High School in the northern California suburb of Pleasant Valley. A soft-spoken woman in her middle forties, she has been a teacher for a total of eleven (non-consecutive) years, having left teaching for a lengthy period in order to indulge her passions for travel and pottery crafting, the latter vocation supporting the former. Marilyn has little positive to say about the credential program in which she received her teacher training in 1969, although she does not dwell on the topic, considering the inadequacies of her preservice experience self-explanatory: "That was back in the Sixties, before the Writing Project."

Known in the region as an accomplished practitioner, Marilyn's formal laureates include the titles "master" and "mentor teacher." In the former capacity, Marilyn works closely with student teachers receiving placements in her school and with teacher education supervisors at the local university. The title "mentor teacher" was awarded to Marilyn by her school district in recognition of her efforts in helping teachers "find ways to get more writing into their classrooms."

Not atypical of most participants in this teacher research group, Marilyn leads a charged professional life. She is a teacher-consultant for the National Writing Project, a member of the National Council of Teachers of English, and is accustomed to presenting her ideas on the role of writing in language arts education at national conferences for educators. She is also involved with a number of regionally-based innovative educational programs, including one concerning the teaching of gifted children and another experimenting with a portfolio approach to the assessment of student writing.

But the professional activity in which Marilyn is most invested and about which she feels the most "passionately" is teacher research. Marilyn has strong convictions about the role of teacher research in the wider political arena of school restructuring. She strongly advocates incentives for teachers' classroom research efforts. School boards have funding for teacher training,

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[5] Three of the case study teachers—one elementary, one secondary, and one college-level teacher—informed the portrait of Marilyn; two—one high school and one college-level teacher—informed that of Kate. Paula is comprised of data from the remaining three focal participants—all elementary school teachers.

she points out, articulating the phrase "teacher training" in a manner which leaves no doubt about her contempt for current inservice teacher education practices. Why not for teacher research? Moreover, "Teacher research ought to be *the* model of staff development," she continues. "We need time, we need support from each other, and we need an ongoing systematic kind of look at each other in classrooms. It should be happening at *all* schools." Marilyn is equally adamant about financial compensation for teacher research: "[Teachers] have to be given the feeling that what they do is important, that what they're going to discover is going to make a difference. To them, and to their districts." And time and money, Marilyn maintains, are the only reliable indices of respect on the part of school board officials toward teachers as professionals.

Marilyn credits her involvement with the teacher research group to her "mentor," who was enthusiastic about a pilot group he had participated in. Listening to her mentor talk and reading about his research was, for Marilyn, "the best of possible introductions to the kind of teacher research that I embrace and love and feel impassioned about, that is ... self-examination and writing about what's going on in the teacher and in the kids in the classroom," an approach to research that is different, she volunteers, from the "university research emphasis."

From her articulation of "the issues that divide" teacher researchers from "university types," it is clear that Marilyn sees the relationship between the two groups as adversarial. And although Marilyn is aware that many of the authors of pieces she has read in connection with her research and pedagogic interests—Donald Graves, Lucy Calkins, Donald Murray, Janet Emig, to name a few—may hold university teaching positions, she thinks of herself not as a reader of "university research" but rather as a reader of "other teachers' research experiences."[6] However, Marilyn does not consider it necessary that classroom teachers read university research to inform their thinking about issues related to their pedagogic practices and the learning strategies of their students. She *does* believe that teachers need to be exposed to "lots of models of what teacher research might look like. That's the most important thing."

Marilyn's issues with university researchers are varied, ranging across methodological and stylistic concerns to what she perceives as the recalcitrance of the university community with respect to teacher research ("And don't forget the put-downs, too, about teachers' *stor*ies"). The

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[6] In an article titled "Reading as a teacher," Fecho (1993) provides an articulate rationale for Marilyn's views as a reader of research. In brief, he argues that classroom practitioners and university researchers comprise distinct "interpretive communities" with different needs and objectives, and that these differences determine how members of each community approach and ultimately interpret their readings. Although teachers and university researchers who consider problems in similar topic areas may consult the same sources, he continues, when teachers read they translate theory simultaneously into practice in order to serve the immediate needs of their classrooms; conversely, university researchers read more with an eye to aspects of theory and design.

methodological concerns have to do in part with academic mores about measures of reliability and validity, which Marilyn interprets as a put-down of teachers as authoritative sources of knowledge about what actually and beneficially goes on in classrooms. Beyond measures of validity with respect to research findings, Marilyn has several additional methodological concerns about university research. One has to do with the role of the researcher in the research "process" and the claims to "objectivity" that university researchers make by virtue of their "outside observer" status. (Like many participants in this teacher research group, she opposes "process" to "product.") "With teacher research," Marilyn explains, "the teacher is part of the research problem." Marilyn defines teacher research as a "process" of "reflexive activity that informs practice. One's own practice."

Modus operandi is another one of Marilyn's methodological concerns with university research. Because for Marilyn part of the research process entails adapting one's own teaching practices to the discoveries one is making in the course of classroom-based inquiry, the teacher-researcher must remain "open" and "flexible" about research design and procedures. This modus operandi, Marilyn believes, is contrary to that adopted by most university-based researchers, who "come in with a preconceived plan." She sees them as rationalistic—that is, as devoted to the pursuit of absolute, context-free knowledge—while the right practice for teacher researchers entails an allegiance to flow and merging.[7]

On the rhetorical level, Marilyn's ambivalence toward university research initially appears contradictory. On the one hand, she does not find this mode of inquiry—or at least its presentational forms—to be sufficiently engaging for teachers. Conversely, however, she fears that teachers who read university research may feel compelled to imitate the writing styles observed in such pieces. The result of this latter course of action, according to Marilyn, would be disastrous: "teachers who've lost their voices." But what would motivate teachers to imitate lifeless writing styles? "Right now," she explains, "teachers are so confused. They don't know what their stuff should look like." Continuing, she says that some teachers ask: "If it's supposed to be research, is it credible unless it looks like university research?"

Clearly the issue of the researcher's voice is an emotionally loaded theme for Marilyn, as she reveals in her discussion of the most frustrating aspect of her participation in the teacher research group: "There are people in our group with a different picture in their head of what teacher research is, and what I see it [as] and what I think most of the teacher research communities around the country see it [as]." Those people—that is, those Marilyn sees as having important loyalties to the university research community—"are

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[7]Other university educators involved with teacher research groups or with teachers as co-researchers have noted a tendency prevalent among teacher-researcher colleagues to view "university research" as stereotypical, positivistic, quantitative inquiry (Sarah Freedman & Elizabeth Simons, personal communication). See Schecter & Ramirez (1992) for more details on how this belief informed the practices of members of this particular group.

using this group as an occasion to do very traditional university research." That in itself Marilyn concedes is a legitimate course of action. However, Marilyn thinks they are "factionalizing" the group, which saddens her "because it gets in the way" of what she takes to be the natural course of teacher research practice.

A member of a writing response group, Marilyn writes all the time; her pieces "flow" out of the journal in which she records her observations and reflections on the events that unfold daily in her classroom. Marilyn also has published several articles in national magazines and in journals read widely by language arts teachers. Three years ago, Marilyn won an award for one of these articles.

For Marilyn, writing is a way to "embrace the messiness" of classroom life, to "try things, ask questions, look and see what's happening, adjust, try again, write it, see what they've written, make some sense of all those pieces." This perspective on the role of writing in the evolution of teachers' thinking about their pedagogic practices is for Marilyn consistent with the "whole idea of a process classroom: with kids, you don't have to give them outlines, you don't have to give them topics, you just let things happen and it's not neat, it's not clean, it's- things evolve." Clearly the link between the modus operandi of teacher research and—to use Marilyn's words—the "process classroom" is not adventitious; Marilyn's current research project is on the topic of choice in a student-centered classroom. She credits her involvement in teacher research with a substantial alteration in her "stance in the classroom": before "I used to be pretty traditional in the sense that I gave vocabulary tests and taught AP English and had all the answers." Now Marilyn sees herself as more "the observer and the co-researcher with the kids."

For Marilyn, writing is a necessary component of the research process: "Writing is essential." "It's not just thinking about teaching and thinking about some changes or—or even the process of research. Looking at your kids and the data through writing forces you to consider other hypotheses." Moreover, writing is also a sign that a teacher believes that what she is doing is important, that "this matters to me and I want it to be good."

Connected to Marilyn's strong opinions about the importance of writing in teacher research is her ancillary concern with "getting our stuff published." She believes that locating and facilitating appropriate and sufficient publication vehicles is a continuing problem in teacher research. However, with regard to this particular problem she is optimistic. For Marilyn teacher research is a "movement," and as the movement continues to take hold and grow, so will its dissemination channels. Even now, teacher research in-house publications are "popping up" all over the country. "This is what an underground movement feels like. I mean *we are* the underground. We're publishing stuff, we're writing thick volumes and we're talking about the movement!"

Teacher Research for Social Change: Kate

Kate teaches eighth-grade English at Montgomery Middle School in the inner city. She has been a teacher for twenty years—including a year in the Peace Corps—with "one year off to have a baby." She chose teaching as a profession because she wanted to "serve: that's what women did then, became nurses or nuns or teachers." An honors college student, she describes her Teacher Education courses as "useless: none of that means anything until you really begin to see it in the classroom." After fifteen years of classroom teaching experience, Kate resumed university study in order to pursue a Masters degree in Education, a learning experience she found both "exciting" and "challenging": "There's disequilibrium and then you get it and then you kind of get comfortable and then you move on and get uncomfortable again."

In addition to being a National Writing Project teacher-consultant, Kate retains membership in several professional associations, including the National Council of Teachers of English, although she claims that her involvement in these organizations is sporadic. Nevertheless, she reads the newsletters and journals accompanying her various memberships, and thus keeps abreast of current opportunities for professional growth. Several years back she received an NEH grant to study literature for a summer at a university on the east coast. Kate says this was the best summer of her life. Recently she won a small grant from the National Council of Teachers of English to conduct a teacher-research study.

Kate is impassioned about improving conditions for kids in schools, especially at the classroom level. She understands teacher research to be an instrument for accomplishing this agenda. For Kate, it is research findings that are crucial, not so much who is conducting the research. She thinks research can be useful for change at two levels at least: findings can be deployed to empower students, to provide them with meaningful choices and the means to follow through on them, in their daily classroom dealings; and they can also be marshaled to convince people who are in positions of influence to make organizational changes for the benefit of kids in classrooms.

This orientation is connected with an understanding of the school administration's role in research that contrasts with Marilyn's conception: Kate's concern is not so much that school board officials show disrespect to teachers by failing to accord them time and money for research; rather, she focuses on the research itself when she says, "I think it's incredible that school districts don't read any research." She is adamant that "somehow school districts have to get the reading and research into classroom teachers." She also believes that teachers' unions should play a prominent role in keeping teachers up with research. Like all of her colleagues in the teacher-research group, Kate believes research can help solidify teaching as a profession. But it is the ability of teachers to control different forms of research practice and product—no matter where these forms originate—that is the crucial aspect

for her, not necessarily the staking out of an independent republic of teacher research.

Kate's route into teacher research reflects her relatively ecumenical view of the practice. Kate credits two university professors for her motivation to join the group. One taught a qualitative methods course which Kate took as part of her MA program. The other was principal investigator on a research project with a site in Kate's school, a woman whose insights Kate came to value. Kate joined the group, she says, both to do research on her own and to "read research and study the theory." She loves the university connection at least partly because of the academic tradition available there and emphasizes that she doesn't feel "threatened" by university people. In fact, she values university-trained classroom observers, and wishes the group could have more contact with them.

Her view is that a gulf between school-based and university-based researchers need not exist. Moreover, she considers university courses to be desirable sources of knowledge about new developments in classroom-based inquiry. "It would be nice," she says, "if [the university] could give a course for teacher researchers just called, you know, 'Current Research' or something, so that teachers could take that and have- kind of open up new ideas and keep them current." The division that does exist for her is the one between teacher researchers embracing the "empowerment" position—whose philosophy, Kate believes, dominates the structure and content of the group—and more ecumenical ones like herself. She sees methodological, stylistic, and epistemological divisions. These divisions are located not only in the realm of research, but are to be found in conceptions of teaching too.

When it comes to method, Kate desires exposure to a range of paradigms of research that includes, but is not limited to, teacher research. She thinks she will learn to do her own research best if she reads a wide variety of literature and infers from it the means by which published researchers constructed and executed their projects. "It's not enough to just say 'observe your students and write down what you see,'" Kate maintains, as she launches into a critical assessment of the functioning of the group. "There's knowledge out there and I want it and I haven't gotten it. It's like we're supposed to create these forms out of nothing. And that's ridiculous." Kate sees Marilyn as only paying lip service to variety in research, while actually using a "method" that amounts to an affirmation that teachers examining their own classrooms necessarily do valid research solely by virtue of their professional status. Nor does Kate see herself as a university researcher in training—as an agent who, at least in the construction of some of her cohorts, remains aloof from the intimate pedagogical relationships teachers are invariably involved in. This role is recognized by Kate as both undesirable and untenable. Like Marilyn, Kate sees teacher researchers as involved in reflexive activity that affects specific classroom practices; in engaging in that reflexive activity, however, she feels the need to draw on research traditions outside of Marilyn's comfort zone.

Unwilling to consider personal experience sufficient grounding for her claims, in the face of what she considers to be the absence of norms for judgments about validity and reliability in teacher research, Kate believes that teacher researchers should exercise epistemological caution when making claims about their data. For Kate, this caution takes the form of flexibility that involves a difficult and sometimes painful movement between a particular hypothesis and the data that bear on it. It also involves the ability to recognize when a hypothesis is not supported: "When you see a problem at school, something that you want to solve, then you think 'well I'll do a piece of research. And I'll collect the data and I'll- I'll prove [the hypothesis].' And then you- maybe you'll prove the other way. But I think that's the neat thing." One of the key values Kate accords to research is that it removes her from her teacher role a little; it is fine with her if she comes to see the world from a momentarily "unteacherly" perspective. She sees the distancing offered as serving both her own cognitive and practical needs and a broader political demand for less rather than more division between people who earn their livings as educators of whatever order.

Kate's orientation toward academic forms of presentation is one of politically independent opportunism. She does not see academic style as a good in and of itself, but rather admits occasions for which mastery of the prerequisite rhetorical forms proves useful, times when a teacher researcher needs "to present something in a really academic way ... to the people who can make some other [than immediate classroom] changes." Kate goes on more explicitly, issuing a counter-argument to Marilyn's contentions regarding the dangers of co-optation by the university crowd: "There's knowledge about how to put materials together that we could have access to that would not prevent us from creating our own forms ... We could co-opt that knowledge. Why does that have to co-opt us?" Thus, in her dedication to the clarification of practice, Kate does not worry about the origins of the analytical means of clarification. For Kate the right method is the right method, and such a method under any other name or auspice is still the right method. One practical outcome of this attitude is Kate's ability to win research grants, enhanced also by her habit of talking to university faculty who are outfitted with the knowledge of favored styles and fashionable topics essential to winning grant competitions.

Since her agenda is focused in large part on improving conditions for students, Kate is interested in reaching the broadest audience possible. The question of audience figures prominently in the importance that Kate accords to communication through written products. In fact, one of the key similarities between Kate and Marilyn is that both consider written products crucial to and inseparable from research. Nevertheless, while Marilyn values the discipline automatically afforded by the process of writing, however that process takes place, Kate is more interested in disciplining the process, in focusing it toward a definite communicative outcome that can be more or less powerful in shaping the opportunities offered to kids in schools. When Kate says that she thinks "the system often doesn't see the kids as learners," she is

identifying a state of affairs that she thinks should and could be changed by teacher research, the effects of which depend on writing.

Kate's teaching philosophy also diverges from Marilyn's, although here too there is considerable overlap. Both the divergence and overlap occur around the issue of choice, which both Marilyn and Kate want to afford their students. The difference is that Kate orients choice toward relatively specific educational outcomes, and is therefore willing to limit the extent of student choice when she thinks teacher direction is necessary. Marilyn, on the other hand, feels that methods which involve overt directives from the teacher are coercive and insensitive; she sees increasing student choice as an end in itself. Kate knows of Marilyn's objections to her seeming authoritarianism and considers them unreasonable. She sees them as stemming from a certain "smugness" about "the process approach" that is blind to the recalcitrant systemic problems in schools, and if she has to push a little harder on those students ill-served by conventional schooling, then she is prepared to defend her actions.

Teacher Research for Professional Development: Paula

Paula teaches second and third grade—"all subjects, including physical education"—at the newly constructed Valencia Elementary School in multi-ethnic Fullerton. She has been an elementary school teacher for seven years, having graduated from a National Writing Project K-12 Teacher Credential program at a local university in 1983. This is Paula's first year at Valencia; she and a close colleague requested a transfer to the new school in order to "get away from our former principal, who was a terrible administrator."

Like the majority of her colleagues in the teacher research group, Paula maintains a number of professional affiliations, including the National Council of Teachers of English, the International Reading Association, and the National Council of Teachers of Math, though her activity in them seems to be fairly low-level. In professional matters Paula devotes most of her energy to school-district groups and events. She is attuned to the outlook of the administration on matters, especially when it comes to the definition of teaching duty and job status. Asked how many years she has been teaching, her response is: "between six and seven years, [it] depends on who you look to for credit. STR [State Teachers Retirement] gives me 6.5 right now." This attunement, Paula believes, is the key to professional advancement. At the end of the study on which this analysis is based, Paula has already begun to see the fruits of her labor: she has been appointed staff-development consultant for her school board.

Much of the time Paula appears to be concerned not with establishing greater teacher control over the educational process, but rather with making her way in a bureaucratic system. She had two reasons for joining the teacher research group, reasons that may seem at first glance to operate somewhat at odds with each other. First, she sought qualification for mentor teacher status, to which her district attaches a special stipend. She had heard from colleagues

in the National Writing Project network that several local school boards, including her own, had been persuaded to accept participation in institutionally sponsored teacher research as qualification for this status. Second, she was interested in the form of study, or the prestige, offered by a university setting: "I think secretly if I would win the lottery or something I'd love to be able to work for a Ph.D. I have no reason in terms of getting a job. I love the classroom, and I don't need a Ph.D. in my district to score higher on the salary scale, so this [the teacher research group] is the closest thing."

Although Paula's initial motive for taking part in the group primarily involved professional advancement and, for want of a better phrase, a university connection, at the end of her first year she perceives other benefits deriving from her experience of teacher research, benefits related to self-actualization. The most important of these is a positive effect on her teaching, represented in her seeing children increasingly as inquirers and her own role increasingly as facilitator of children's inquiry. As Paula says, "It [teacher research] forces me to reflect on what I'm doing in my classroom." Teacher research is "a process that helps [teachers] refine their teaching." She expands on the nature of this process: "Teachers as researchers are constantly learning, exploring and learning." For Paula, structuring this process around group activity has the additional benefit of countering feelings of professional isolation, a problem she previously saw as endemic to the profession. Commending her colleagues as "great resources for ideas," she avows, "I love the sharing of problems, successes, goals, that I get with other teachers in the program."

Concern for her students and with the relative success and failure of her various classroom interventions comprise the framework according to which Paula represents her experience of the research process. Asked about the progress of her research by a response group colleague, Paula responds with a detailed update on her class. For Paula the smaller response group, where she shares with colleagues recent activities and thinking in the area of "Data Collection," allows her to air concerns and receive feedback about her students' responses to her most recent classroom interventions.

That Paula casts her progress in terms of curricular fine-tuning sometimes irritates colleagues with different orientations who maintain that "that's not what we're here for." They see themselves as participating in the group to help one another with "problems with [their] research," not "problems in the classroom." But for Paula this dichotomy is a false one: "I can't separate my teaching from my research." "I think that being a researcher isn't foreign to teachers," she says in response to inquiry about possible role conflict between being a teacher and being a researcher. For Paula, the major impediment to teachers becoming better researchers is "class load." If teachers' work burdens were lightened, she believes, they would devote the extra time to research.

Paula makes frequent but uneven entries in her journal, the maintenance of which is expected from participants in this group. However, she seems unmotivated to engage in any writing for an outside audience. She describes the "Final Report" which she submitted at the end of the group season

accurately as "an expanded and revised journal." For Paula the journal format is helpful to her professional development—"I use it as a point of reference"—and she also feels that she profits from revising and reformatting her entries at the end of the season. She is careful, though, to validate the actions of several of her colleagues who do not submit Final Reports, thus foregoing the second half of a $500 stipend awarded to participants: "It really is not crucial that a teacher researcher write up what he or she has done." In the same vein, she expresses no interest in publishing her research findings—either in the group's in-house publication or in external magazines, newsletters, and journals. For her it is enough that "I've done the research. I don't need to write it up. Especially for publication."

For colleagues of differing persuasions, Paula's perspective on the role of writing in the research process is untenable. Although these colleagues do not necessarily agree with one another on other important issues related to the mission and ultimate character of teacher research, on this point they stand united: "Writing [something] up is a key component in the research process. Otherwise all it is is some brainstorming and some networking."

Notwithstanding the marginalization of her position within the dynamics of this group, Paula joins her colleagues in articulating a belief that teacher research has implications beyond the level of the individual classroom: "I look at myself as part of something larger than one classroom and yet committed to one classroom. So [teacher research has] given me a kind of a depth and a breadth." Expanding on the potential role of teacher research in "connecting" the individual classroom teacher to the "larger" picture, Paula continues, "[teacher research is a] way of shaping the profession ... taking the responsibility to change things that you think may need changing, or [to] spread ideas that you think need to be spread." Since Paula doesn't believe that writing is a necessary component of teacher research, however, her mechanisms for "spreading ideas" are de facto limited to the "networking" that many of her colleagues find incomplete as a dissemination strategy.

SYNTHESIS

The Hegemonic Core and the Margin

Figures 1 through 3 contain a synthesis of the commonalities and differences among the teacher empowerment (TE), social change (SC), and professional development (PD) positions with respect to topics within three foci—research, teaching, and writing—around which information contributed by participants in group meetings, formal and informal discussions, and journal entries coalesced. Considered globally, perhaps the most conspicuous feature is the line of demarcation between the two hegemonic positions, on the one hand, and the PDs on the other. Across the foci, the first two

Position	Elements
Teacher empowerment	
	Source of knowledge: Practical experience. Text: different models of teacher research. Not: conventional university research methods or personnel. Method: Attention to documentation; thus use of field notes, audio recorders, etc. Immediate goal: Written product. Long-term goal: Educational change, especially empowerment of teachers.
Social change	
	Source of knowledge: Practical experience. Text: different models of teacher and university research. Method: Attention to documentation; thus use of field notes, audio recorders, etc. Immediate goal: Written product. Long-term goal: Educational change, with equal emphasis on empowerment of students and teachers.
Professional development	
	Source of knowledge: Practical experience. Method: Less attention to documentation. Immediate goal: (1) Refinement of teaching strategies. (2) Professional advancement. Long-term goal: Educational change, especially empowerment of teachers.

Figure 1. Perspectives on research.

Position	Elements
Teacher empowerment	
	Source of knowledge: Students teach themselves and each other. Not: administrative powers that be. Teacher role: Facilitative: providing and clarifying range of choices for students. Goal: Empowerment of students, with some emphasis on student control of curriculum.
Social change	
	Source of knowledge: Emphasis on student's active learning.* Not: administrative powers that be. Teacher role: Facilitative, sometimes directive: when student blocked from knowledge by surrounding conditions. Goal: Empowerment of students, with some emphasis on student control of received forms.
Professional development	
	Source of knowledge: More teacher than student. Teacher role: Employing methods that generate positive results in classroom; success measured by feedback from students. Goal: Contentment of students, with some emphasis on immediate results.

Figure 2. Perspectives on teaching/learning.

Position	Elements
Teacher empowerment	Role: Text drives thinking. Purpose: Individual: self-discovery and self-expression. Social: communication with wider audience of possible converts. Publication increases prestige of teachers and teaching profession. Audience: More teachers than others. Genres: Free writing. Narratives. Expository. Goal: Conference presentations and publication.
Social change	Role: Text drives thinking. Purpose: Individual: cognitive advancement. Individual's better understanding of the social. Social: Tool for persuasion. Audience: Anyone concerned with particular research issues. Less exclusively teachers than for TEs. Genres: Free writing. Narratives. Expository (more than TEs). Some academic. Goal: Conference presentations and publication.
Professional development	Role: (Ambivalence about this topic.) Purpose: Individual: sometimes helpful for insight into self and students. Not crucial to research process. Audience: Self and confidantes. Genres: Free writing.

Figure 3. Perspectives on writing.

positions share many more elements with each other than they do with the PDs; it is within such commonalities, however, that the tensions are most clearly defined.

In connection with research, in Figure 1, all positions take practical teaching experience to be a crucial source of knowledge. TEs and SCs differ from PDs, however, in sharing an emphasis on texts. Following from this differing emphasis on texts as sources of knowledge is a difference between PDs and the hegemonic positions in the importance they ascribe to the generation of texts and text-like (in the sense that they fix discourse) materials methodologically: TEs and SCs place great stock in documentation in the course of research; PDs do not. A very similar division exists when it comes to the immediate goal of research, with the first two positions concentrating on written products and the third position aiming at outcomes that do not necessarily involve anything written. Finally, the long-term goals for research of the different positions evidence a common orientation toward educational change.

Beliefs about teaching (Figure 2) again throw the difference between the first two positions and the last into relief, but in this focus, perhaps, the three positions have the most in common. TEs and SCs commonly stress the student as the source of knowledge, although the stress differs in amount. The PD position is probably the most teacher-centered of the three. This teacher-centeredness is highlighted rather than blurred by PDs' attentiveness to verbal feedback from their students as a measure of the effect of specific pedagogic interventions. Students are a source of knowledge, but about how well the *teacher* is doing. This is indicated indirectly by Paula when she emphasizes how her students reacted to her research project, and notes how important a good reaction was for her. It is important to remember in Paula's statements about research the refusal to distinguish between research and teaching that we noted in her portrait. For Paula, research success *is* teaching success, and teaching success is determined by an informal evaluation done by students: "They were fascinated," she says. "They loved being the subject of a study." "If the class in fact had said it didn't want it I would not have done the project."

The distinctive shape of the teacher-student relationship in the PD position on teaching is connected with the PDs' goal of teaching, which differs from the goal articulated by the other positions: PDs place much importance on pleasing the students, while both the other positions are concerned with student empowerment, whether this involves student contentment at a given point in time or not.

Beliefs about the role and importance of writing may distinguish most clearly between the TEs and SCs on the one hand, and the PDs on the other. Figure 3 shows the TEs and SCs to be laden with explicit and nuanced emphases on writing. Both of these positions regard writing as a vital component of the research process, sharing the belief that writing is at once a practice necessary for discovering and honing one's thinking and a conceptual tool that helps to refine social understanding. Both groups are sold on writing

as power. (In this respect—that is, in that they consider writing to be *the* instrument of change—TEs subscribe to a definitive element of the university model they criticize.) In contrast PDs are considerably less preoccupied with writing, although they are not opposed in principle to its presence in the research process. As an activity linked with publishing, however, writing holds absolutely no interest for the PDs. Finally, PDs do not make—at least they do not articulate—a connection between writing and power. These differences in attitude toward writing in connection with research account in large part for the marginalization of the PD position in the teacher research group, a marginalization the outcome of which is graphically illustrated in these figures.

Teacher Empowerment versus Social Change Positions

The seeming gulf between PDs and the other groups is not the only noteworthy comparison highlighted through the foci. There are important differences between TEs and SCs too, differences within commonalities, taking the form of different angles on common issues. In fact, TEs and SCs can be regarded as "cultural categories" (following Eckert, 1989)—that is, as groups distinguished mostly by the perception and the reinforcement of the perception of an oppositional relationship rather than by a lack of shared features on any imaginable "objective" scale. Once members of the group became socialized to these cultural categories, they used them as a frame of reference for the positioning—the act of locating themselves at various distances from each other—to which we referred earlier in this paper.

With regard to research (Figure 1), TEs were emphatically opposed to something that SCs were accepting of: the spectrum of university-based research on classrooms. While the former position accepts some forms of such research, it regards as pernicious those which it considers conventional in their pursuit of an analytical remove from active classroom involvement. Connected with this is a difference not spelled out in Figure 1, which is that though the SC position focuses on teacher practice as a source of research knowledge, it does not do so as a matter of principle, but rather as a convenient point of departure and data-source for school-based researchers. TEs, in contrast, see the locus of valid knowledge as the shared experience of an individual teacher and his or her students in a classroom.

TEs' privileging of the teaching experience as a source of research knowledge is mirrored by their privileging of the creative experience of the learner when it comes to the source of knowledge in the teaching process (Figure 2). In fact, it is almost as if TEs refute the idea of teaching per se, concentrating all of their attention on the learner, and their effort on making learning as internally-directed by the student as it can be. SCs, although equally concerned with the role students play in their own learning, tend to feel the need to take a more active part in directing the student's activity. SCs hold a firmly articulated vision of the larger educational ends they want to achieve, and believe it is their responsibility to draw on their fund of

classroom experience, as well as research carried out by themselves and others, in mediating the students' learning to meet these goals.

Within their common valuation of writing and the publication thereof (Figure 3), TEs and SCs diverge in their ideas about writing's purpose and audience. Both see individual and social purposes to writing. TEs are concerned with self-expression and self-discovery when it comes to individual purposes, thus privileging an "expressionistic" orientation to writing (the term comes from Berlin, 1988). The social purposes are communication and enhanced prestige of the teaching profession. SCs value less the uniqueness of the individual underscored by the TE attention to *selves* than the cognitive advancement of both teachers and students. At the same time they recognize and consider important larger social entities than the individual by underscoring the function of writing to be to increase individuals' understanding of and control over social forces that produce differential access to education. Despite the greater explicit tension in the SC view between the social and the individual, it is important to note that in this view the individual function of writing is still paramount, for SCs believe that in order to act socially, first they must learn what they think through a writing process the agent of which is the individual. Finally, publication, which both TEs and SCs pursue, is the most obviously social outcome of writing. Even here there is a difference in focus between the two positions, with the TEs writing, in a fully self-conscious political manner, for a smaller audience—mainly other teachers—than SCs, who are more concerned with reaching the largest possible audience of teachers, administrators, policy makers, and others in a position to influence educational outcomes.

DISCUSSION

As it turned out, the group was more or less evenly divided among the three categories, with those holding the professional development perspective outnumbering adherents to each of the other positions by probably one or two persons at any given time. However, the major power struggle—at least as evidenced in the group meetings—was between the TEs and the SCs. At times this conflict was overt. In one case it was expressed as TE resistance to the presence of university researchers on conference colloquia organized by group members; in another case it took the form of hostility on the part of SCs toward an invited guest presenter they viewed as attempting to pass off her questionable, "touchy feely" brand of pedagogy as research. Most of the time, however, the conflict was more muted, with opposing forces occupying themselves in pursuits other than those on the formal agenda—revising text, for example, when the official activity entailed participation in large group discussion of an assigned reading. The PD position was neither the focus of a great deal of group debate, relative to the other two positions, nor the attributed source of stressful emotions among non-like-minded colleagues. Dissenters by and large regarded the PDs'

perspective as marginal rather than as a competing political stance, perhaps because the PDs did not themselves define their position in political terms. In fact, the PDs did not appear to recognize ideological groupings at all. In this they were a sharp contrast to members of the hegemonic groups, who frequently used language—"the other position," "their position," or simply "they"—that accentuated the polarization between the TEs and SCs. The PD position can be seen as one configured around the principle of avoidance of conflict. Conflict with students is seen as a problem. Likewise conflict with others: for example, PDs are distinguished by their lack of explicit opposition to the notion of the established administration as a source of knowledge, an opposition shared by the other positions, at least at this time, when teacher research awaits acceptance by school administrators as a valid form of staff development. Finally, PDs eschew conflict with other members of the group. Thus the hegemony of the other two positions goes unchallenged.

While TEs, SCs, and PDs converged in their interest in teacher empowerment, divergences between the first two groups and the third in conceptualizing the issues and strategies of empowerment were paramount. Both TEs and SCs framed the issues in oppositional terms; in the local context of the group they stood in opposition to each other, while in a broader context they both stood opposed—sometimes even shoulder-to-shoulder—to schooling as established. In contrast, the PDs—having joined the group for different, non-oppositional reasons, and maintaining an understanding of teacher-research issues in non-oppositional terms—would articulate in a spontaneous and seemingly unpredictable manner the positions held by either of the other two groups in the various debates that arose.

The absence of conflictual engagement among PDs is consistent with their lack of emphasis on writing; in this confluence we discern a possible connection between orientations of what we will call, for want of better words, channels and styles of cognition and social involvement. The lack of emphasis on writing seems to work to confine the PDs' reflexivity, to explain why Paula does not "separate [her] teaching from [her] research." PDs are like the other positions in articulating that reflexivity is crucial, but they merge the practices of teaching and research so closely that reflexivity almost seems an impossibility because the research, perhaps because it is not necessarily represented in text, is not sufficiently distinct from teaching to be systematically reflected upon. Also connected with this was the tendency, absent in the case of the PDs, of members of the other two groups to frame discussions of their work as members of a culture and, alternately, as outsiders looking in. We are making no suggestions about causality here. It is just as likely that PDs did not place high value on writing because of their sensitivity to the role it could play in conflict as it is that they did not articulate relationships in terms of tension because of their lukewarm attitude toward writing.

Whatever its origins, the chameleon-like quality of the PDs is one reason for our continued insistence on the fluidity of the boundaries between categories. A second, less obtrusive, reason for our unwillingness to treat the

boundaries as fixed and clearly marked is the tendency of a number of participants to identify themselves in private as members of the group opposed to the group they align with publicly. In group meetings such participants typically adhered to positions opposed to those espoused in personal interviews and, sometimes, also to those identified within small group discussions. Moreover, these "double agents" expressed the extreme version of each position in these different situations. In the end it was the behavior of the double agents that proved the most valuable and, in our opinion, valid (but see Wolcott, 1990, on the problem of validity in ethnographic interpretation) means of identifying the group's hegemonic core (although we should also point out that both group leaders were associated with the TE position). Our data are consistent with the sociological dictum that in the view of a fully assembled social body, persons concerned with others' impressions of them will act in accordance with the perceived norm (Goffman, 1959). This norm is one the most powerful members of the body will be prepared to enforce with sanctions should they consider it necessary. All participants know this.

The question arises: given the tensions and stresses that appeared to accompany the binary interpretation of values associated with the hegemonic groups, why did participants continue to concentrate their social energies in maintaining the polarization? One part of the answer to this question involves the sociological nature of close, circumscribed groups, in which differences that would carry little significance in larger groups become intensified (see Eckert, 1989; Willis, 1977). Another, more substantial part of the answer, we believe, has to do with the important role played by writing in this particular context. Writing, it should be remembered, was an important component of the respective ideologies of both TEs and SCs: the tool—the weapon—for change. If writing, or the "composing process"—the term used in the writing research business—serves to elucidate and clarify one's thinking, it at the same time serves to elucidate and clarify one's values. Once these values are revealed, authors must attempt by different means—stylistic devices, genres, and so on—to win over their audiences to their points of view. Both the TEs and the SCs wrote to persuade. They also wrote to publish. The goal of publication contributes another important dimension to group dynamics: when authors decide to allow a large audience access to their work, they enter a professional arena that is both broader and of a higher stratum in terms of the power to marshal resources for social change in the direction favored by the writer. In this arena the stakes are larger, and identifying one's allies and opponents becomes increasingly useful. Simply put, persuasive writers who reach large audiences make enemies. The politics opened up by writing and publishing practice carried over into the unwritten social action of the actors in this teacher research group.

All this having been said, we believe that the positionings played out in this teacher-research group are creative, and promise to enrich pedagogic practice. In writing this piece, we have attempted to present the three perspectives in their complexity and openness—that is, with attending

ambivalences and self-contradictory talk—in a manner that both makes sense of the experience of the actors and elucidates some crucial emergent issues in teacher research circles. By recognizing the differences among the actors to be real and powerful, we hoped to present a fuller description of teacher research than would be available in a depiction that avoided questions of the power of systems of practiced ideas and the generative conflict between them. And while we recognize that the specific findings of this study with respect to positions elucidated are not generalizable to every teacher research group active in North America, and would not wish to bring too early theoretical or empirical closure to the issues investigated, we *are* presenting these positions as terms of a debate—schemas inhering in the discourse about teacher research developing among participants in the teacher research movement.

Before concluding, we want to stress the potential of the teacher research movement for generating valuable, needed discussion of assumptions underlying practices of literacy instruction. We feel that the teacher research movement is in an especially advantageous position from which to stimulate such discussion because, as an emerging field, teacher research is more open to the epistemological effects and institutional outcomes of ideological differences. We also want to present what for us is an important argument in support of teacher research *groups*, an argument to combine with other important briefs in support of teacher research already in circulation (e.g., Bissex & Bullock, 1987; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1992; Mohr & Maclean, 1987; Myers, 1985; Nixon, 1981; Schecter & Ramirez, 1992). We want to argue that teacher research groups are ideal vehicles for both reflecting ideologies of teaching (we've argued that ideologies are good things to know about, and we take as axiomatic their reflection to be a good thing as well) and for transforming these ideologies. Teacher research groups are excellent transformation vehicles for several reasons: first, they constitute zones where educators come into contact with one another under conditions of heightened reflexive activity; and second, they are social arenas with constellations of features that can serve to magnify differences and lead, in this manner, to productive professional catharses during which educators may reconsider their theories of teaching and learning. And since, according to our formulation of the social nature of thinking, when we as educators revise our theories of teaching and learning we necessarily revise our everyday relations in the classroom as well, to revise our ideologies is at once to alter the attending pedagogic practices. This, at any rate, represents our hope for the teacher research movement as its power and influence continue to grow.

Finally, the ideological dimensions of divergence in a teacher research group are significant in another respect—as a counter-hypothesis to gratuitous, non-empirical speculation concerning possible motives for oppositional tensions that existed among participants. The group in question having been comprised mainly of female teacher-researchers, there existed a predisposition to understand participants' actions as the expression of unproductive, personalized tendencies rooted deep in the female psyche

(Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986).[8] Such an interpretation, we believe, would be erroneous. Although we do not deny generally the relationship between ideology, social interaction, and context—and in particular the importance of the social backdrop to the ideological identities we have described—the women who comprised the majority of participants in this teacher research group were not involved in counterproductive, gender-specific behavior. To the contrary, through their ideological clarifications and positionings they were asserting both their agency as educators and their control over their professional identities and future trajectories.

Michael Apple and colleagues (Apple, 1983; Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986; Apple & Jungk, 1990) argue that the increasing loss of control by teachers over the labor process of teaching is leading to dangerous simplifications and rigidifications of curricular content and, by implication, to a reduction of students' abilities to control their lives through the tools of literate thinking afforded in classrooms. Loss of control is a complicated process, one in which teachers can actively collude when pressures on them are heightened (Apple & Jungk, 1990, p. 246, ff.; Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986)—and they *are* being heightened. The issue of control was a crucial one for our colleagues in this teacher research group as well and, as we have seen, informed their ideologies of both teaching and researching. At a time when fewer and fewer people are willing to assume responsibility for the problems of the schools, when school personnel blame parents for sending their children to school not already knowing how to read and write, and when everyone blames teachers for failing to implement policies that fluctuate daily with political re-positionings at district, state, and national levels, the continuing engagement of professionals who consider the development of a socially responsible epistemology of educational practice central to their identities is of no small importance.

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[8] In the early stages of the project, this view appeared to dominate among the "top brass" of the group's co-sponsors. Remarks were made concerning the prevalence of "bickering" among the women, and interpretations were provided that hypothesized interpersonal conflicts among specific participants as explanatory factors. Schecter may even have contributed to this misreading by verifying indirect reports of intragroup dissonance.

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